

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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R 061445Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2069

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 0036

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, HO

SUBJECT: LOCAL LEADERS' REACTIONS TO STATE OF UNION MESSAGE

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 0010

BEGIN SUMMARY: SEVERAL LOCAL LEADERS HAVE GIVEN PRESS INTERVIEWS REACTING TO CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR'S STATE OF UNION MESSAGE. COMMENTS LARGELY PREDICTABLE AND CENTER ON MELGAR'S ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALITY, POSSIBLY CULMINATING IN ELECTIONS IN 1979. END SUMMARY.

1. EX-PRESIDENT RAMON CRUZ COMMENTED THAT THE ACTUAL RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALITY WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL 1982 BECAUSE IN 1979 THERE WOULD STILL HAVE TO BE EXTENSIVE PREPARATIONS FOR ELECTIONS. HE STATED THAT MELGAR HAS FORGOTTEN THAT STABLE INSTITUTIONS FOR THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT CAN ONLY BE CREATED WITHIN A CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK. CRUZ ALSO COMMENTED THAT IT APPEARS THAT THE MILITARY LEADERS THINK THAT DEVELOPMENT CAN ONLY BE

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CARRIED OUT BY A NON-DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT.

2. JULIAN LAGOS ALVAREZ, PRESIDENT OF GENERAL WORKER'S CENTRAL (CGT), SAID THAT THE AGRARIAN PROBLEM WILL CONTINUE TO BE CENTRAL, AND THAT MELGAR FAILED TO DEFINE WHAT THE GOH ACTUALLY WANTS TO DO IN THAT AREA. ALSO, WHILE MELGAR CALLED FOR GREATER PRODUCTION, HE FAILED TO COMMENT ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF THAT PRODUCTION. HE REMARKED THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ENDING OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN 1979 IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE POLITICAL PARTIES; HOWEVER, SHOULD PARTIES FAIL TO DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY, IT WOULD AGAIN OPEN THE DOOR TO MILITARY GOVERNMENT.

3. MARIO SOSA NAVARRO, NUMBER THREE MAN IN THE HONDURAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCH), STATED THAT THE PCH HAS NEVER BEEN AGAINST THE IDEA OF CONSTITUTIONALITY IN GENERAL, BUT IS OPPOSED TO A RETURN TO THE OLD FORM OF CONSTITUTIONALITY IMPOSED BY THE TRADITIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES. HE COMMENTED THAT THE ADVISORY COUNCIL TO BE ESTABLISHED IN JANUARY WILL CARRY OUT SOME FUNCTIONS OF THE LEGISLATURE, AND THUS CHANGE THE NATURE OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT. HE ACCUSED THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF BEING CONTRADICTIONARY AND OF MOVING TO THE RIGHT.

4. MAX VELASQUEZ DIAZ, A LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY, SAID THAT ALL NEW YEAR'S MESSAGES WERE SIMILAR IN THAT THEY HELD OUT GREAT HOPES WHICH WERE SELDOM MET. HE SUGGESTED THAT MELGAR MAY REMAIN IN OFFICE ONLY THREE YEARS, TURNING OVER POWER TO A CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT ON JANUARY 1, 1979. HE ALSO SAID THAT, ON THE PRETEXT OF BEING THE ONLY FORCE ABLE TO SAVE THE COUNTRY, THE MILITARY WAS REMAINING IN POWER LONGER THAN PRUDENT.

5. CAMILO RIVERA GIRON, PRESIDENT OF THE HONDURAN PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN'S COUNCIL (COHEP), ANNOUNCED THAT COHEP HAS FORMED A COMMISSION TO STUDY SPEECH. HE FURTHER STATED THAT THE MESSAGE HAS MANY GOOD POINTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIALOGUE WITH GOVERNMENT VIA THE ADVISORY COUNCIL, AND THE ANNOUNCED RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT. HE COMMENDED THE SPEECH'S ASSURANCES TO PRIVATE BUSINESS. HE UNCLASSIFIED

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REMARKED, HOWEVER, THAT PARTS OF THE SPEECH WITH RESPECT TO PARTICIPATION ON THE ADVISORY COUNCIL AND THE REALITY OF DIALOGUE REMAIN UNCLEAR.

6. MIGUEL ANDONIE FERNANDEZ, LEADER OF THE INNOVATION AND UNITY PARTY (PINU), SAID THAT MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE SPEECH IS WHAT CONCRETE STEPS THE GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO RETURN COUNTRY TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE. HE SAID

THAT MELGAR'S CALL FOR RETURN TO PREVIOUS LEVELS OF PRODUCTION WOULD BE A TRIUMPH FOR THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT IF IT HAPPENS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
SANCHEZ

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